Historical Society rededicates City Hall meeting room

On January 28, 1982, Carbondale City Council granted permission to the Carbondale restoration committee, now known as the Carbondale Historical Society, to use Room 301 Carbondale City Hall as a base of operations for the work of the group. In exchange for permission to use that room (the tower room on the third floor), the Historical Society agreed to restore that room at its own expense.

Accordingly, the Historical Society began the restoration of Room 301 on November 26, 1982. On February 20, 1983, the room was completely restored and opened to the public, with appropriate rededication ceremonies.

At those rededication ceremonies, the president of the Historical Society, S.Robert Powell, welcomed the 40 persons who gathered in Room 301 for the event. In his remarks, Powell stated that the restoration of Room 301, under the technical direction of Russell T. Powell, was carried out primarily by seven people, namely: John V. Buberniak, Jean Colville, Jane Dailey, Russell T. Powell, S. Robert Powell, William R. Powell and Robert J. Tomaine. Helen L. (Russell) Powell also helped.

Many individuals and organizations donated materials to the Historical Society for the restoration of Room 301. Roy Crocker, of Crocker's Paint & Paper Store, donated five gallons of paint, as well as paint brushes. Ken and Jean Colville donated new window shades and draperies for the room. The draperies will be sown by Mrs. Robert DeGrazia. The Hendrick Manufacturing Company donated a perforated metal panel for the door of Room 301. Walter and Helen Powell donated a new rug. Helen Powell donated two bouquets of tulips for the opening day ceremonies. Russell T. Powell donated an antique chandelier for the light fixture above the landing between the second and third floor of City Hall. Three dozen early-twentieth century folding chairs, for use at the rededication ceremonies, were donated to the historical Society by Oliver and Kathryn (Wood) Shifler. Refreshments for the spectators who attended the opening day ceremonies in Room 301 were provided by Jean Colville, Rosemary Heth and Helen Powell. The president of the Historical Society, S. Robert Powell, emphasized that all materials and supplies for the restoration of the room, which were not donated to the Society, were purchased from stores and suppliers in the greater Carbondale area.

To further commemorate the opening of Room 301, the first showing of "An Exhibition of Photographs from The Metro's 2nd Annual Photo Contest" opened in Room 301 on February 20. This photography show, which was organized by Robert J. Tomaine, closed on March 20. Tomaine, a professional photographer from Jermyn and a staff member of The Metro, spoke to the group about the photography show, which was judged by Tomaine and by Dave Krewson of Clarks Summit. Tomaine announced that the first prize in this contest was awarded to Stephen Ciuccoli of Scranton for his photograph entitled "Studio Loft 79." Second prize was awarded to Cynthia Hodin of Clarks Green; third prize was awarded to Richard Stewart of Clarks Summit. An honorable mention was awarded to Bernard L. Lewis of Union Dale.

During the month that this exhibition was open to the public, hundreds of area residents visited the gallery, including groups from area high schools. On March 11, between 9 and 11 a.m., the graphic arts class of Frank Krantz at Lakeland Senior High School visited the exhibition; on that same day, between 1 and 3 p.m., the graphic arts class of Charles Scavo at Carbondale Area Junior-Senior High School visited the show. During both of these school visits to the exhibition, Donald W. Powell, a professor of art history in Widener University and a member of the Historical Society, delivered an illustrated lecture in which he outlined the history of studio photography in Carbondale and in northeastern Pennsylvania. Professor Powell showed the students examples of, and explained the differences among, the following kinds of photographs: daguerreotype, ambrotype, tintype, carte-de-visite photograph and cabinet photograph. During each of these school visits, Robert J. Tomaine and S. Robert Powell spoke to the groups on the aesthetic appreciation of photographs, using the photographs on exhibit in Room 301 to underline the points made.

At the conclusion of the opening day ceremonies on February 20, S. Robert Powell spoke briefly on the history of Carbondale art exhibitions. He spoke, in particular, of the "Carbondale Loan Exhibition" that was held in Carbondale City Hall in February 1879 and of the "Loan Exhibit in Connection with the Semi-Centennial of the Incorporation of the City of Carbondale" on September 2-4, 1901. Powell then stated that Room 301 Carbondale City Hall will be used year round as an exhibition space for art shows and exhibitions. Following "An Exhibition of Photographs from The Metro's 2nd Annual Photo Contest," a show of Carbondale paintings, photographs and drawings will open in Room 301 Carbondale City Hall. Individuals and organizations who have paintings, photographs and drawings that they would like to lend or donate to the Historical Society for this exhibition are asked to get in touch with S. Robert Powell at 282-5197.